



HR



Weekly Summary

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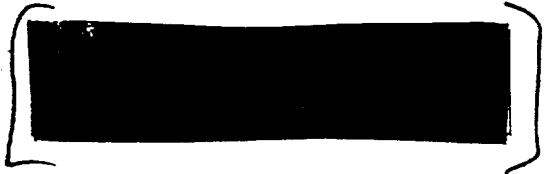
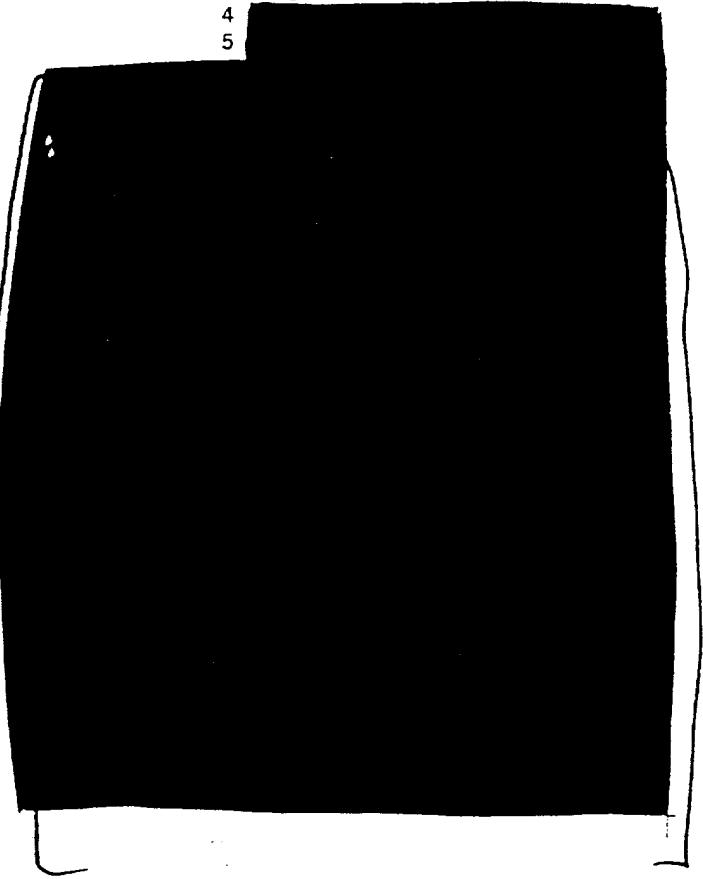
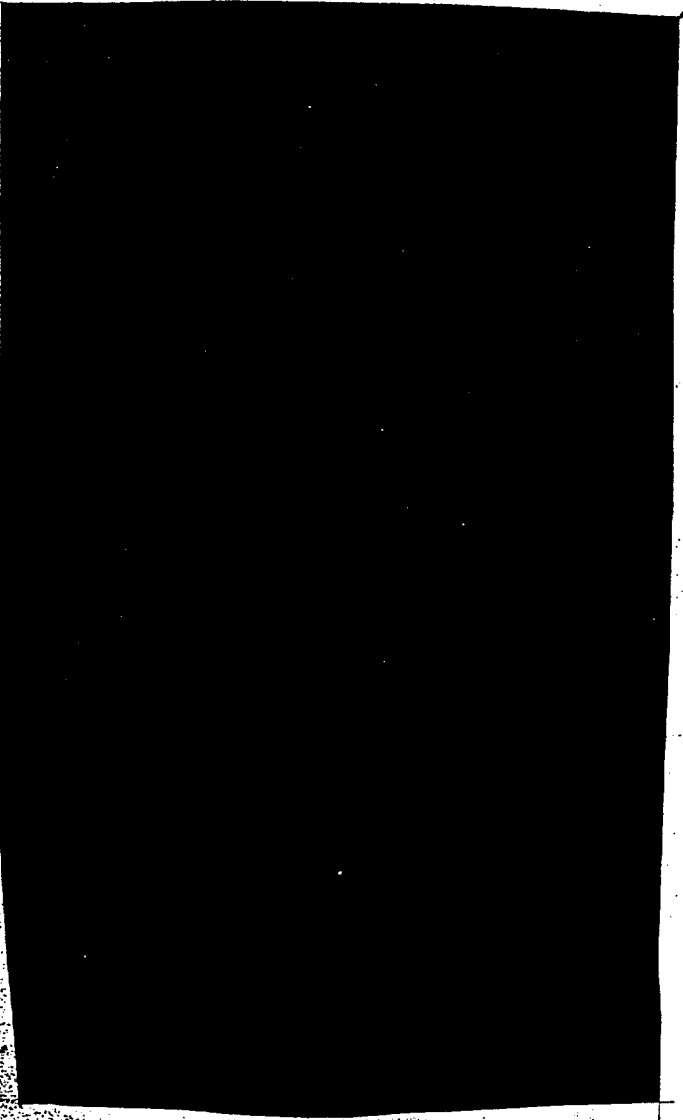
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ANGOLA: ON AND ON

None of the contending parties in the civil war scored any major military gains during the past week, although the forces opposing the Soviet-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola made some progress in the west-central sector. Leaders of the two sides are intensifying their efforts to win political support among African states prior to the planned special summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity. The conference apparently will not convene before next month.

The Military Situation

Late last week, a strike force including elements of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola and the allied National Front for the Liberation of Angola pushed the Popular Movement out of the town of Cela.

The muscle of this and other combined National Union - National Front task groups is provided by unknown numbers of South African soldiers, white mercenaries, and black Angolans who fought for the Portuguese against the Popular Movement during the insurgency.

North of Luanda, the military situation has remained essentially static since Popular Movement forces, backed by Cuban-manned artillery, advanced two weeks ago to within about 50 miles of Ambriz, the headquarters of the Zairian-supported National Front. Destruction of bridges over several rivers and the start of the rainy season have checked the Movement's drive, at least temporarily.

African Split Widens

African foreign ministers will not meet in Addis Ababa this weekend, as had been announced



by OAU officials, to set a date and agenda for a later OAU summit. Governments supporting the Popular Movement's Agostinho Neto insisted the two meetings be held back-to-back, but OAU members have not yet agreed on timing. The Popular Movement's friends are eager for an early summit, believing that, under present circumstances, they can exploit the meeting to the Movement's advantage. At present the diplomatic trend in Africa continues to run in favor of the Movement; with Sudan's formal recognition of Neto's regime this week, the score among African states now is 14 for the Luanda government to none for the nominal joint regime proclaimed by his rivals last month.

Countries that want to keep the OAU officially neutral in the Angolan conflict, on the other hand, are trying to buy time. These countries and the National Union's Savimbi apparently hope to counter the political damage to the Movement's Angolan adversaries from the highly publicized aid they are getting from South Africa by developing a backlash against Soviet and Cuban assistance to Neto. Support will be sought for a blanket condemnation of all outside involvement in Angola and for a cease-fire and government of national unity there.

With the OAU meetings in abeyance, Savimbi flew to Uganda this week for talks with OAU chairman Idi Amin. The National Union leader is due in Dakar on December 19 to confer with conservative Senegalese President Senghor and reportedly intends on the same trip to visit Cameroon and Ivory Coast. In his talks with the West African leaders, all of whom oppose the Popular Movement's drive for OAU recognition as the sole legitimate Angolan nationalist group, Savimbi presumably will be focusing on concerting tactics for building African support against the Soviets and Cubans.

Savimbi and his allies face an uphill struggle in their effort to neutralize the highly emotional South African issue, which mainly motivated Nigeria's and Tanzania's recognition of the Neto regime and is clearly causing other African governments to waver in their adherence to neutrality. The Popular Movement, of course, will continue to exploit the issue for all it is worth. This week the Movement stoked the fire by exhibiting, at a press conference in Luanda, four South African soldiers captured in the recent fighting at Cela. Neto's lieutenant then took the four with him on a visit to Nigeria that began in Lagos on December 16; they are certain to attract wide publicity there and wherever else he may visit.

Savimbi, while in Kampala, made an attempt to disown Pretoria's assistance by claiming that

any South African forces in Angola are there on their own and by calling on African states to help drive them out. His argument is not likely to be persuasive in many African capitals.

Soviet Press Admits Support

The Soviet central press has, for the first time, indirectly admitted that both Moscow and Havana are providing military support to the Popular Movement in Angola.

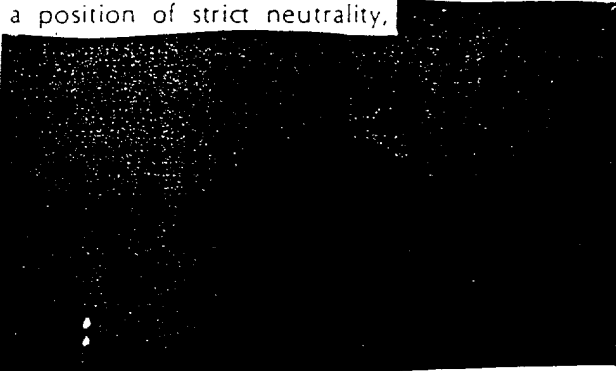
Earlier this month *Pravda*, in reporting on a press conference held by President Nyerere in Brussels, cited the Tanzanian President's statement that he was "certain" the USSR was providing the MPLA with the "necessary arms" for its struggle against the "interventionists" from South Africa. In an accompanying commentary, *Pravda* stated inter alia that the Soviet Union, which stands "among the loyal friends" of the Angolan people and was one of the first to welcome the birth of an independent regime, "is providing help and support to Angola during these difficult days."

Last weekend, moreover, the Soviet news agency Tass took the unusual step of publicizing MPLA leader Neto's expression of gratitude for Moscow's "all-round help" to the Angolan people. At the same time, *Pravda* provided the first hint seen thus far in the Soviet press that Cuba is furnishing substantial assistance to the MPLA. The Communist Party daily said that Cuba "always supported all national liberation movements in Africa, including the MPLA—the sole legitimate representative of the Angolan people."

Moscow's decision to make public, even in an unofficial way, its role in Angola coincides with recent MPLA gains in the military and diplomatic arena and suggests that the Soviets may want to get their fair share of the credit for these successes. The decision also dovetails with recent revelations in the US press of allegedly substantial US support for the MPLA's rivals; hence, the Soviets may now feel less compelled to mask the dimensions of their own involvement.

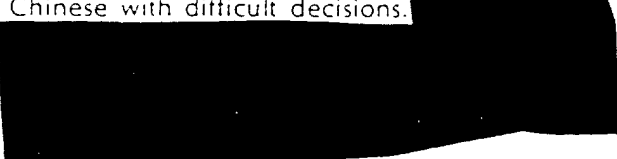
Sino-Soviet Rivalry

Peking is still making an effort to capitalize on Moscow's heavy-handed support for the Popular Movement. Publicly, the Chinese are maintaining a position of strict neutrality.



As long as other countries maintain their current levels of assistance to the National Front and the National Union, China can be expected to maintain a low profile with its former clients, endorse the Organization of African Unity's call for neutrality toward Angola, and score propaganda points at Moscow's expense. Peking is clearly concerned, however, that it may not be able to sustain this approach.

Any significant reduction in support for the National Front and National Union by other countries, for example, would present the Chinese with difficult decisions.



The prospect of a reversal of the Organization of African Unity's position on Angola or an agreement among its members to go their separate ways on the recognition issue would be equally unsettling to the Chinese. This would almost certainly lead to much wider African and Third World recognition for the Popular Movement and leave Peking on the wrong side of the fence.

